



Victims' Voice NEWSLETTER



Volume #1 | Issue #3 | Montana Department of Corrections Victim Services

Announcement

During this quarterly issue of Victims' Voice, we kick off October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Domestic Violence dynamics are particularly difficult to address within the Corrections system. Of all crimes, the crime of domestic violence poses the highest risk for a fatality while an offender is under supervision.

Research indicates, even if the charge related to domestic violence is a misdemeanor, it is a high-risk indicator for recidivism. Supervising a batterer or managing behaviors while a batterer is incarcerated is difficult due to the manipulative behaviors that exist within the domestic violence dynamics.

We hope you'll enjoy reading and learning about some of the great things the DOC is doing. We welcome any feedback, content requests and ideas for future topics. Please email CorVictimLiaison@mt.gov.

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Probation Officer Recognition MT DOC P&P Region IV - PO Caine Hilario



PO Caine Hilario has been selected to be recognized for this quarter by Victim Services to distinguish his exemplary work with victims.

"Victim Services is an underutilized program and I absolutely will seek assistance again when I encounter another victim situation with one of my offenders. Victim Liaisons are a great asset for P&P Officers."

Home Base: Billings, MT

Previous Employment: Caine worked for the State of Washington for the Washington State Liquor Cannabis Board, FedEx, and the United States Marine Corp.

Why did you choose corrections?: I felt this would be a challenging position. My goal is to help people by giving them guidance and to help them see they are not stuck in the system but can have a better life. I find it rewarding knowing I am helping others and their families do things differently and have a healthier lifestyle. I choose to listen to people and take what they say at face value. I believe in my clients unless they prove otherwise. I ask individuals on my caseload to be honest with me. Many of them find it difficult to trust authority but I work to gain their trust over time.

Nomination Quote: *"Caine put in a lot of time and effort on this client's behalf which showed he cares about the safety and success of clients on his caseload."* - Maria Dinkel

DOC Victim Services salutes Caine for going above and beyond to assist an offender/victim find their way to safety and healing.



Caine recently worked with a Human Trafficking survivor. He recognized signs in her behavior consistent with this crime. Caine reports his offender seemed filled with anxiety, reluctant to discuss her issues with him, held distrust of authority figures, did not want to cooperate, reported sexual assault, homelessness and always had a male friend in the lobby waiting for her.

Although it was difficult to gain this offender's trust, Caine reassured her she was not in trouble and had done nothing wrong. Caine recalls introducing his offender to our Victim Liaison Maria Dinkel and thinks laughter and chocolate was able to reduce the hostility of the situation and begin a trusting relationship. Our Victim Liaison offered additional support beyond that of a PO, which was needed by this offender.

Caine and Maria worked with a local Human Trafficking agency to assist this offender be re-located to a safe house program in another area. While this offender/victim has a long road of recovery ahead of her, she is safe and receiving much needed services for healing.

Thank you, Caine!

SURVEY OPPORTUNITY

The Montana Department of Corrections Victim Services Program is in the process of developing a Strategic plan that will help guide us through the next seven years. We recognize that you, as a collaborating division or agency, play an important role in the direction we take in the future. We would be very appreciative if you would take a few minutes out of your busy day to answer a short survey. This survey will be open from October 1st- December 31st.

Survey Monkey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XRZ9H2S>

Alternatively, for a hard copy survey, please email CorVictimLiaison@mt.gov



Domestic Violence & Corrections

PFMA Offender Caseloads:

Many probation officers across the nation are discovering the issues in domestic violence cases are not common in other types of supervision caseloads, such as;

- More interactions with victims
- Interaction with potential new victims
- Working with batterer intervention programs and,
- Trying to understand the unique dynamics of interpersonal relationship violence.

Cycle of Violence: *A common thread in reports by victims who described a cycle of tension building, followed by an explosion or acute violence, followed by a "honeymoon" stage. As the cycle continued, the explosion stage would escalate in severity of violence.*

Since officers have more interactions with victims (or potential new victims if the offender is in a new relationship), it is important to know what stage the relationship is in when investigating potential violations of probation or new crimes of violence. Often when a new episode of violence has occurred and the offender has been arrested, it is not uncommon for the honeymoon stage to commence and the victim may therefore become reluctant to cooperate in future questioning or testifying in court.

Coercive Control: *Series of behaviors that are not necessarily violent but result in the batterer being able to control their intimate partner and children through a pattern of behaviors which may "look innocent" but can cause fear and apprehension in their victims. They include verbal and emotional abuse, isolation, minimization and denial of the violence, of the effects of the injuries on the victim, using the children, threats to harm, economic abuse and others.*

When supervising offenders who are still in a relationship with the victim, or even when they are separated, it is important to recognize the effect that the offender's words or actions can have in terrorizing the victim, absent any new physical evidence.

Why Don't They Leave?: *There are many dynamics that are not evident to the average person that influence this decision. It is not uncommon for victims to accept blame for their batter's behaviors. Some victims do not reach out to the probation officer until a major disagreement ensues. Victims may later recant their statements, minimizing the impact and no longer wish to pursue any disciplinary actions.*

If these situations occur, it is critical to document the behaviors of the victim and/or probationer in your case notes. It is important that probation officers do not blame victims for their decisions and refer the victim to an in-house advocate, or your local shelter program, for them to seek further counsel on their options.

Adapted from: "Domestic Violence Resource Guide for Probation 2019"

Montana Legal Services Association (MLSA)



Find Help and Legal Information online at
www.MTCrimeVictimHelp.Org

Visit www.MTCrimeVictimHelp.Org to find
help and legal information about:

- Sexual Violence
- Domestic Violence
- Stalking
- Elder Abuse
- Child Abuse
- Bullying
- Financial Crimes
- Fraud & Scams
- Identity Theft
- Human Trafficking
- Homicide Survivors
- Other crimes

Where Can Crime Victims in Montana Find Legal Help?

Montana Legal Services Association (MLSA) provides free, confidential legal assistance to crime victims.

Apply Online: Visit www.mtlsa.org. After you submit an online application, a member of the MLSA staff will contact you to complete the application process.

Apply By Phone: Call the HelpLine at (800) 666-6899 to talk with an MLSA staff member. The HelpLine hours are limited.

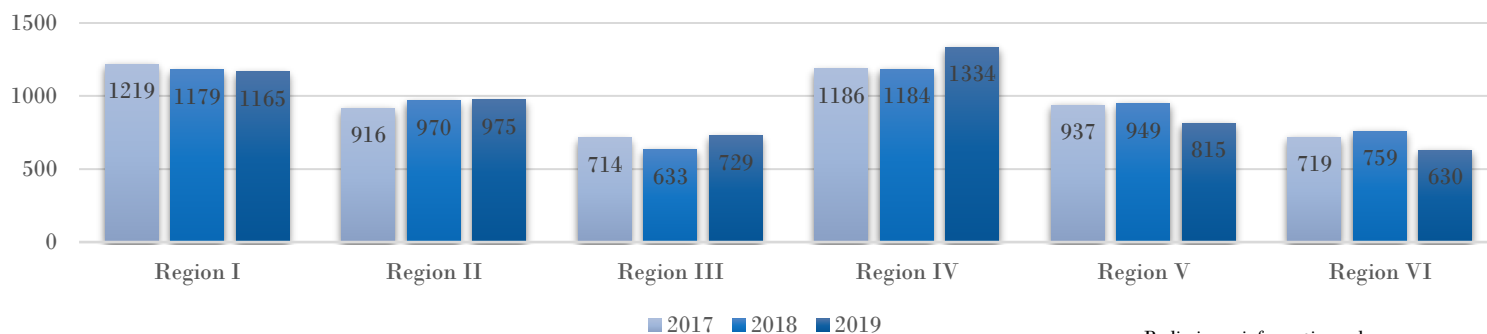
The Montana Legal Services Association has launched a new website connecting crime victims with information and free legal assistance. This new website contains information to help crime victims and service providers find resources and navigate the justice system. It connects crime victims, family members, and service providers in Montana with legal help and supportive services.

On the website users can learn about victims' rights, search a resource library, apply for legal assistance, chat online with a trained Crime Victim Navigator, or use a specially designed Help Tool to find what they need. The site was built with attention towards user safety, confidentiality, accessibility, and functionality for rural crime victims and service providers.

www.mtlsa.org
www.MTCrimeVictimHelp.org

Talking to Offenders about Domestic Violence

Montana PFMA Crimes by P&P Region 2017-2019



Preliminary information only

Commonly Used Tactics by Offenders

Adapted from "Domestic Violence and Probation" by Fernando Mederos, are some common tactics used by batterers as they work with Probation & Parole Officers. You may have encountered some of these during your time in Corrections. We hope you enjoy the refresher.

Batterers will try to “divide and conquer” by running a disinformation campaign. Batterer’s are experts at finding divisions between people and exploiting them. They tell different versions of the facts to different people. Make sure all staff are consistent about the rules. It is important to be in constant communication with the batterer’s program, the batterer’s victim, and the victim service provider.

Expect the batterer to continue denying their behavior and blame the victim. Most battering offenders take months, or longer, to admit their behavior. Instead, they spend much energy trying to enlist a Probation Officer as an ally.

Many batterers attempt to get Probation Officers to back off by being constantly angry and challenging. Many batterers come across as being justifiably angry. They tell you their partners are crazy. Faced with constant “righteous” anger, you may find yourself shifting the discussion to less volatile ground and listening out of polite sympathy. We encourage you to structure conversations carefully and to sharply limit complaints about victims.

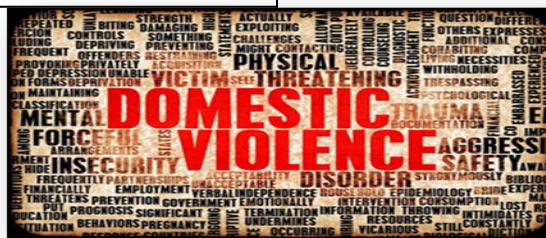
Other offenders attempt to get Probation Officers to back off by being super placating. He wants to do everything possible to “clear up this misunderstanding”. He may even suggest he seek help with his partner. Remember, many abusers are reasonable and charming with everyone, except their victim.

Intimidating offenders will try to wear you down; super-placating offenders will try to enlist you as an ally; BOTH will try to get you to do as little monitoring as possible. When successful, this will give the offender room to pressure his partner, ease back into the house, convince her the court is not serious, etc. We recommend that decisions about intrusiveness and monitoring be based on risk level of possible future domestic violence and to engage a victim service provider.

Offenders may attempt to engage you in arguments about their culpability. It is recommended that Officers not engage in such arguments. If there are legitimate questions about the offender's abusiveness, the batterer's treatment facilitator and/or a victim service provider can assist

Do not tell the batterer anything the victim has told you as it may place the victim in further danger. Speak to each party separately. Do not divulge anything that may endanger the victim. Even if the victim has given you permission to share the information provided, make your own assessment about safety.

State rules in an impersonable fashion; focus on options and consequences. Batterer's often love arguments and dominance struggles. Don't engage. You can say, "I won't argue with you about your probation or being sent to treatment." Clearly define the consequences for non-compliance.



2020 MONTANA CRIME PREVENTION CONFERENCE

MULTIDISCIPLINARY SOLUTIONS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY



2020 Montana Crime Prevention Conference

October 5 - 9, 2020 | Remote Webinars via Zoom

All criminal justice professionals are invited!

Opening keynote speech delivered by Attorney General Tim Fox

Free registration for all remote sessions

Offered again this year: CLE, POST, OPI, and CPE credits

[Post-conference subgrantee training available Oct 22, 2020](#)

BOARD OF CRIME CONTROL

5 S LAST CHANCE GULCH

PO BOX 201408

HELENA, MT 59620-1408

<https://mbcc.mt.gov/>



Victim Services Specific Sessions

Monday, October 5th, 2020: Intimate Partner Violence and Immigration: A Complex Scheme of Power and Control
(Brandi Ries, Ries Law Group & Hilly McGahan, SAFE Harbor Legal Program)

Wednesday, October 7th, 2020: MT Department of Justice Programs Supporting Victims of Crime
(Eric Parsons, MT DOJ)

Friday, October 9th, 2020: Safe, Whole, and Heard: Overview and Discussion of the Rights of Crime Victims in Montana
(Heidi Sanders, MT VLAN)

For more information or questions, contact Jessi Deily at 444-5692 or jessica.deily@mt.gov.

“Trauma creates change you don’t choose. Healing is about creating change you do choose.”

— Michelle Rosenthal

UPCOMING Events

Every Tuesday 9:30-10:30a.m.:

Statewide Victim Services Education Hour

October



*Domestic Violence Awareness Month
National Crime Prevention Month*

October 6th: Montana Fatality Review Commission & HOPE Card

October 13th: Neurobiology of Trauma

October 20th: Domestic Violence Victim

October 27th: The Friendship Center- A Victim Walks Through the Door

November

November 3rd: Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI)

November 10th: Fergus CVA

November 17th: The Ripple Effect of Property Crime

November 24th: Upcoming Grant Opportunities

December



National Human Rights Month

December 1st: A Successful Survivor

December 8th: Helena Municipal Court Victim Witness

December 15th: Yellowstone CVA

December 22nd: Holiday Break

December 29th: Holiday Break

Subject to change

HOW TO CONTACT US

Email: CORVictimLiaison@mt.gov

Helpline: (406) 444-0447 or Toll Free (888) 223-6332

Mail: P.O. Box 201301

Helena, MT 59620-1320

Fax: (406) 444-4920

Website: www.cor.mt.gov/victims

Our victim program office hours are 8 a.m. to 5p.m (MT)
Monday through Friday except state and federal holidays.

It is our practice to return calls within 48 business hours.
Please leave a voicemail including your name, number,
and any pertinent information you can provide.

Visit the Department of Corrections Facebook Page for
the latest agency updates:

<https://www.facebook.com/MTDeptCorrections/>

Visit the Department of Corrections Victim Services
Playlist on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLGfBIY9Dcf-3hfWqfqnu4wi274Tcpxeyw>

STATEWIDE VICTIM SERVICES EDUCATION HOUR

We invite all P&P and facility staff to attend our weekly educational hours in October every Tuesday from 9:30 am to 10:30 am. You'll receive information regarding the neurobiology of trauma (a special 1 ½-hour session by Detective Dan Murphy), hear from a domestic violence survivor and gain insight into the intricacies of services available by those who serve domestic violence survivors.

For a schedule of the weekly speakers, please email CORVictimLiaison@mt.gov.

You can access the trainings through the below TEAMS invite:

Join Microsoft Teams Meeting

+1 406-318-5487 United States, Billings (Toll)

Conference ID: 108 988 550#

